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Volume VI *Number 5*

OLD DEERFIELD
Massachusetts

With Introductory Text by
Rawson W. Haddon

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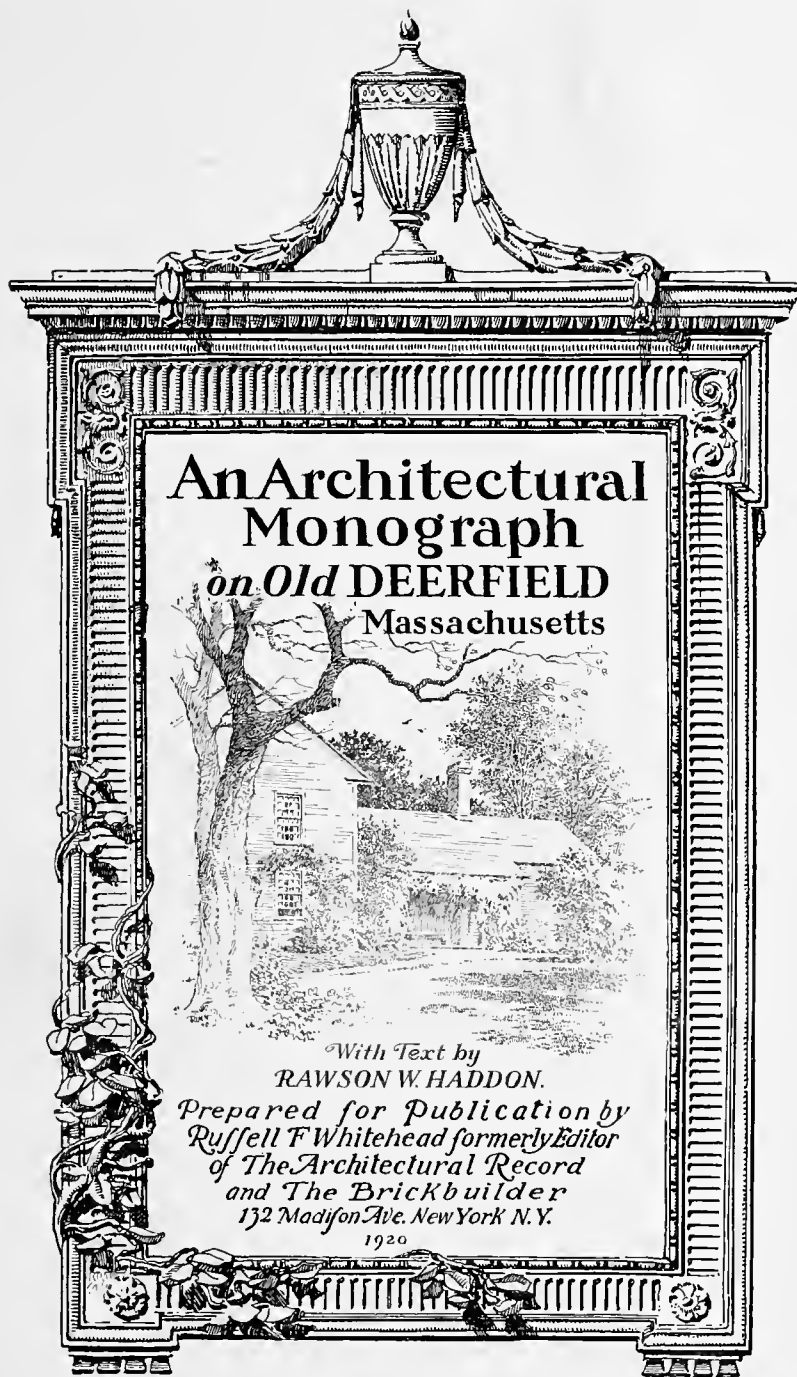
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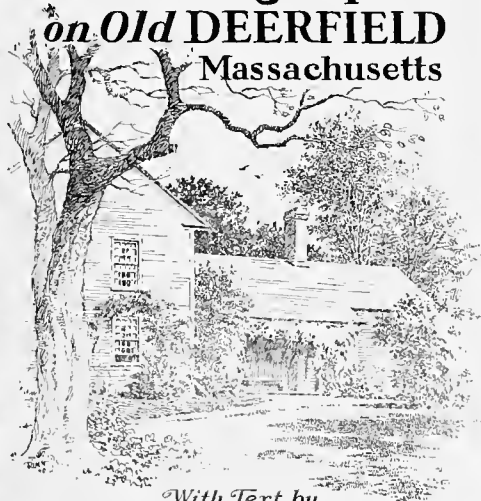
vol: 6

no 5

Folio



An Architectural
Monograph
on Old DEERFIELD
Massachusetts



With Text by
RAWSON W. HADDON.
Prepared for Publication by
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and The Brickbuilder
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1920



THE MILLER HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.
Built *circa* 1710.

THE WHITE PINE SERIES OF ARCHITECTURAL MONOGRAPHS

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION SUGGESTING THE
ARCHITECTURAL USES OF WHITE PINE AND ITS
AVAILABILITY TODAY AS A STRUCTURAL WOOD

Vol. VI

OCTOBER, 1920

No. 5

OLD DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

By RAWSON W. HADDON

Mr. Haddon is one of the younger architectural historians who, following a number of years' study of the early work in New York City, is now studying various phases of the work of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century architects in New England.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENNETH CLARK

I HOPE I shall be excused for mentioning the following bit of gossip which may seem to you to be but slightly connected with the strictest interpretation of my duty (for the present moment) as the introducer of the town of Deerfield, Massachusetts.

There was once a dignified old gentleman, who, like that other old gentleman in "*Cranford*," was noted all through a certain provincial town for always saying *just* the proper thing at the proper time. Imagine, therefore, the horror of his friends, and especially of his wife, when in the course of talk one evening, it having been discovered that a certain young man in the company was a bachelor, the old gentleman, turning to him in a most cordial and enthusiastic way, said, "God bless you, sir; you are indeed a fortunate man, and—" "What!" said his horrified wife. "How can you say such a thing, sir? How CAN you?" "You interrupt me, ma'am," was the old gentleman's reply. "What I was saying was, that he is a very fortunate man, because he has great happiness to look forward to."

The only excuse that I can give you for having mentioned this at all is that it gives me some slight precedent for suggesting to you that if you have not been to Deerfield you also are a fortunate man in that you still have to experience the great pleasure of your first trip through the "pleasant streets of that dear old town."

Starting at one end of Deerfield's main street, following it to its opposite end, and continuing then to the outlying districts, you will pass few houses that are not of interest either because of some historical association or for the unusual merit of their architectural design.

For all practical purposes each Colonial town

in New England repeats to a large degree in its general outlines the salient characteristics of every other Colonial town. And with the exception of some few idiosyncrasies common to certain localities (as the difference between Massachusetts and Rhode Island house planning), the individuality that distinguishes Salem under the influence of McIntire or Greenfield during the era of Asher Benjamin, does not appear until the very end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In Deerfield no predominating style exists to the extent that it does, for instance, in Salem. The buildings, all of which are good examples of their particular time, extend over the whole possible range of periods from the earliest Jacobean-like work through the Asher Benjamin phase to (it must unfortunately be acknowledged in one instance) the days when "Egyptian-Moorish" and in another instance Preraphaelite Gothic were the proper thing in the vocabulary of the "genteel and up-to-date."

Of the hundred-odd houses in the town, the majority are of such great interest that this comparatively small philistine element will be wholly negligible in your enjoyment of this—as some of the natives boast—"sleepiest of all New England towns."

Exteriorly, as might be expected, the earliest houses here, as elsewhere, have little to show (excepting to the most enthusiastic of archaeological experts) that is of interest as architectural detail.

The interest in the earliest houses lies for the most part in their splendid outline and in the carefully studied proportioning of window and door opening to the solid mass of plain

wall surfaces. And, as a rule, the detail which is found in connection with very early houses, when there is such detail as possesses distinctly architectural character, is an addition of later date than the building itself.

But whether this apparent sense of proportion was instinctive or purely accidental and governed, as may well have been the case, by structural exigencies into which no element of selection or proportioning was introduced by the builder, the result is none the less interest-

of this later manner in Deerfield is found in the Old Manse, though competitors as to point of age are found in the Williams, Wetherald, and other houses.

The Williams house offers a number of problems, over the solution of which the inveterate expert might spend a large amount of time. As it stands to-day, the house may either be one built in 1707 to replace an earlier house which was erected by the town for Parson Williams and was burned in 1704, or it is possible that



PARSON WILLIAMS HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.

Now Deerfield Academy, preserved in its present condition with unusual completeness. The best type of work of the middle of the eighteenth century.

ing and worthy of painstaking study by the architect of the present.

It is one of those facts which, like election-time orators, "need no preliminary introduction here," that Colonial architecture possesses little or no monumentality, and its chief power must be said to lie in its characteristic grouping and the ornamental treatments of certain single details of building. It was only in the Middle Period, starting at perhaps the 1740's or 1750's in New England, that a definitely architectural manner began to assert itself in interior and exterior finish and design.

Perhaps the most interesting earlier example

the 1707 house was destroyed and the present one erected in 1756 by the parson's son. Judged in the light of its condition as it stands to-day, one would not hesitate, in spite of all local traditions, to assign to it the later date.

The plan, for instance, very emphatically contradicts the assumption of its early erection. A house in Massachusetts built in 1707 would, of course, have had a central chimney stack, with the rooms and entry grouped around it. The central chimney, however, does not appear in the house at the present time, and the fireplaces are at the central axis of the rear wall of the front rooms on each side of the hall.



THE FRARY HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.

Part of the building was erected in 1683 and is the oldest house in the town.

The entrance door and frame, the window frames and the interior panelling and staircase also suggest the work of the middle rather than the early years of the century.

In spite of all this, however, the solution seems to be that here, as in other authenticated instances in the town, the house was changed and such additions made from time to time as were suggested and made possible by the prosperity of successive owners. Instances are not unknown in Deerfield in which the central chimney was removed at an early date and the plan and interior and exterior details so rearranged as to suggest a middle eighteenth-century erection.

Undoubtedly as it stands to-day, the Williams house consists of the original 1707 frame with improvements in plan and ornamental detail in the taste of the year 1756. It is known that at that date the parson's son, Elijah, "made certain marked alterations in the house, both external and internal," and probably left the building in substantially its present condition.

Richard B. Derby, in his contribution to the *White Pine Monographs* on the "Early Houses of the Connecticut River Valley" (in which, by the way, he has deprived the present number of some of its best thunder by anticipating it in the publication of the charming Asher Benjamin-like Horatio Hoyt house, and others), suggests in the instance of the doorway of the Williams house, and the same thing would hold good for the window frames, a date "probably several decades later" than 1756.

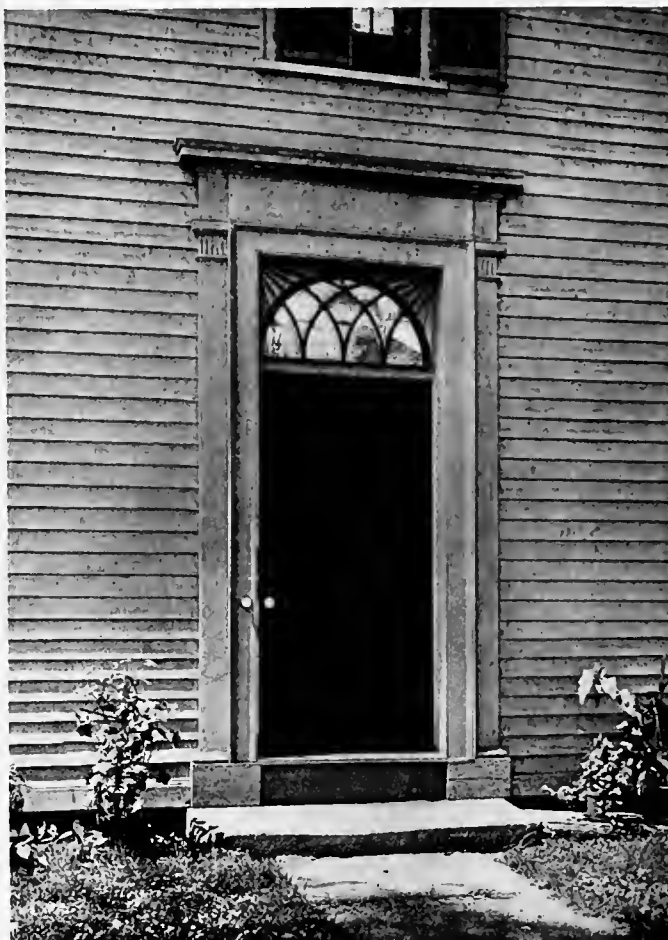
Whatever may be its date, the house is certainly of unusual interest. The scheme of fenestration and the broad blank space between the door and windows on the first floor, and the compact spacing of the windows themselves, are noteworthy features which must be taken into consideration in solving the problem of the remarkable appearance of solidity which the house presents.

The Miller house, built in 1710, which has three windows across the front on the second floor and two on the side (an unusual feature in early houses), might also be found after careful examination to be, in its present condition, the result of several additions. The house was built to replace an earlier one which was destroyed during the French and Indian War.

It will be remembered that Asher Benjamin lived and did some of his best work in Greenfield, a few miles distant from Deerfield. Undoubtedly careful investigation would uncover

some hitherto unrecorded work by him in Deerfield. The doorway of the Bishop Porter house, a building that was erected in 1803, is most suggestive of his manner of design and is without doubt one of the most charming things of its sort in New England, as is also the doorway of the Hawkes house—which doorway has been used several times as a prototype, most successfully perhaps in connection with the restoration of a house dating from the Revolutionary period at Westport, Connecticut.

(Continued on page 12)



THE BISHOP PORTER HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASS.

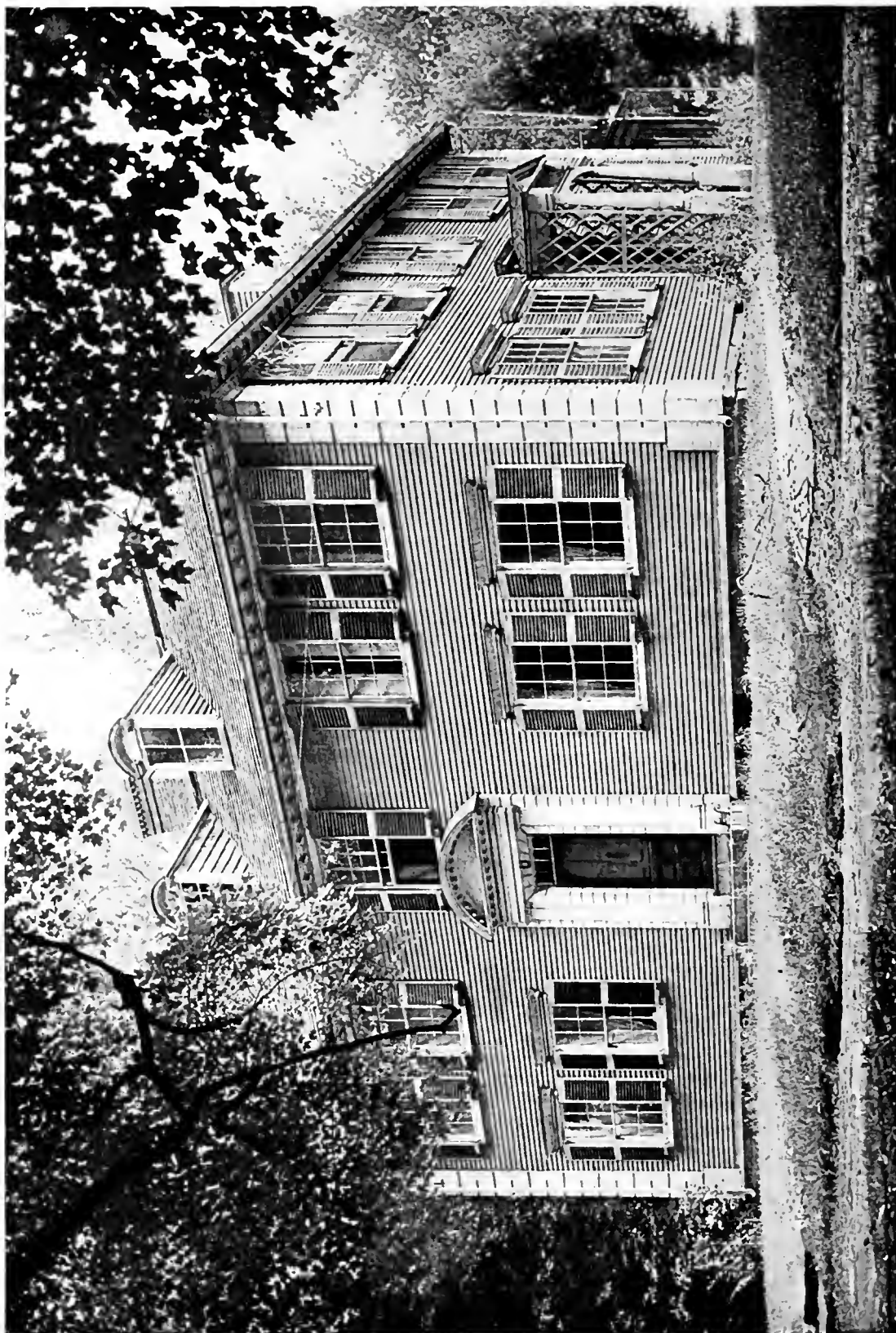
FRONT DOOR DETAIL.

Built in 1803.



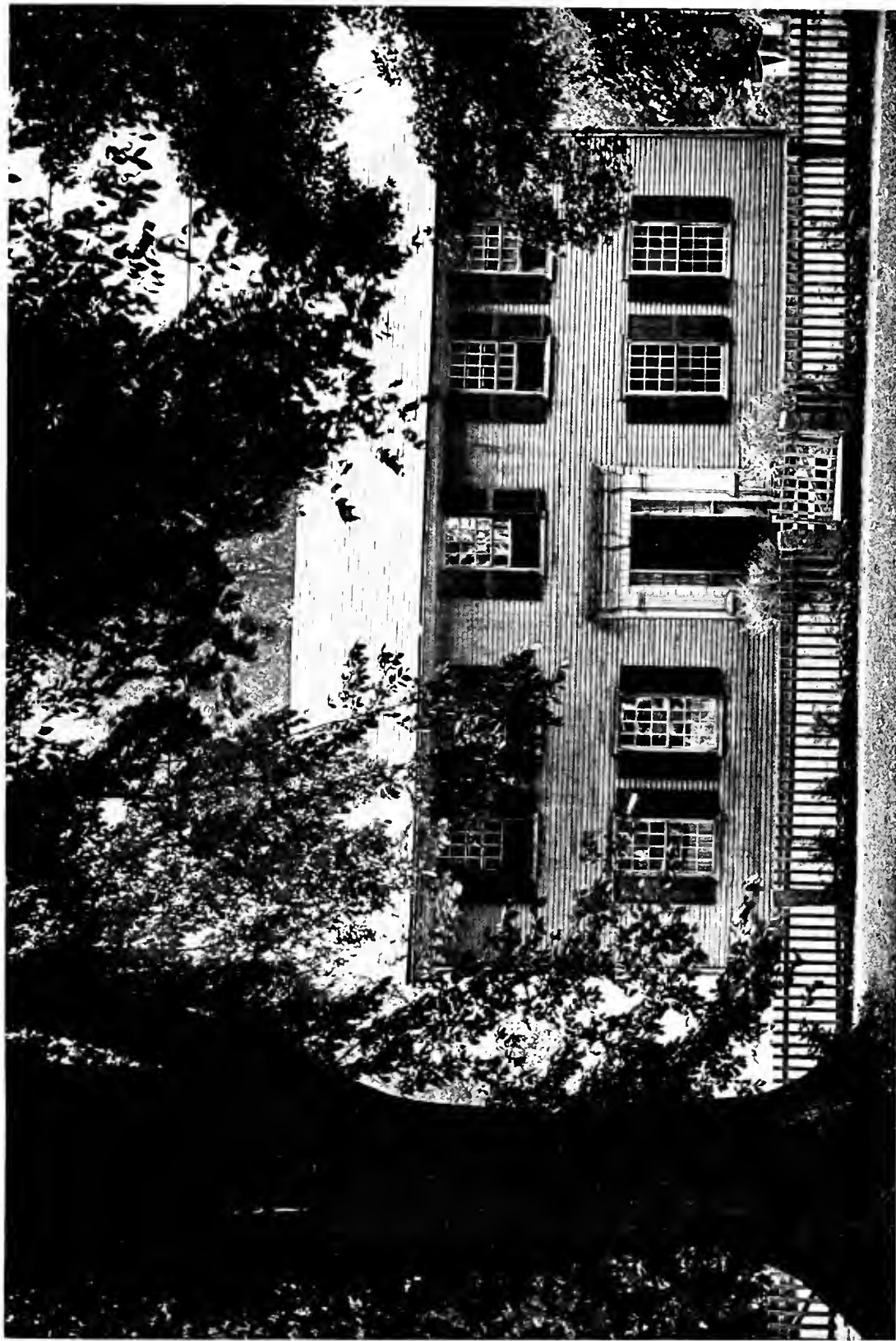
THE OLD MANSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS. Front Door Detail.

An unusually complete example of the type. It still retains the original door, boot scrapers and knocker. Built in 1768.



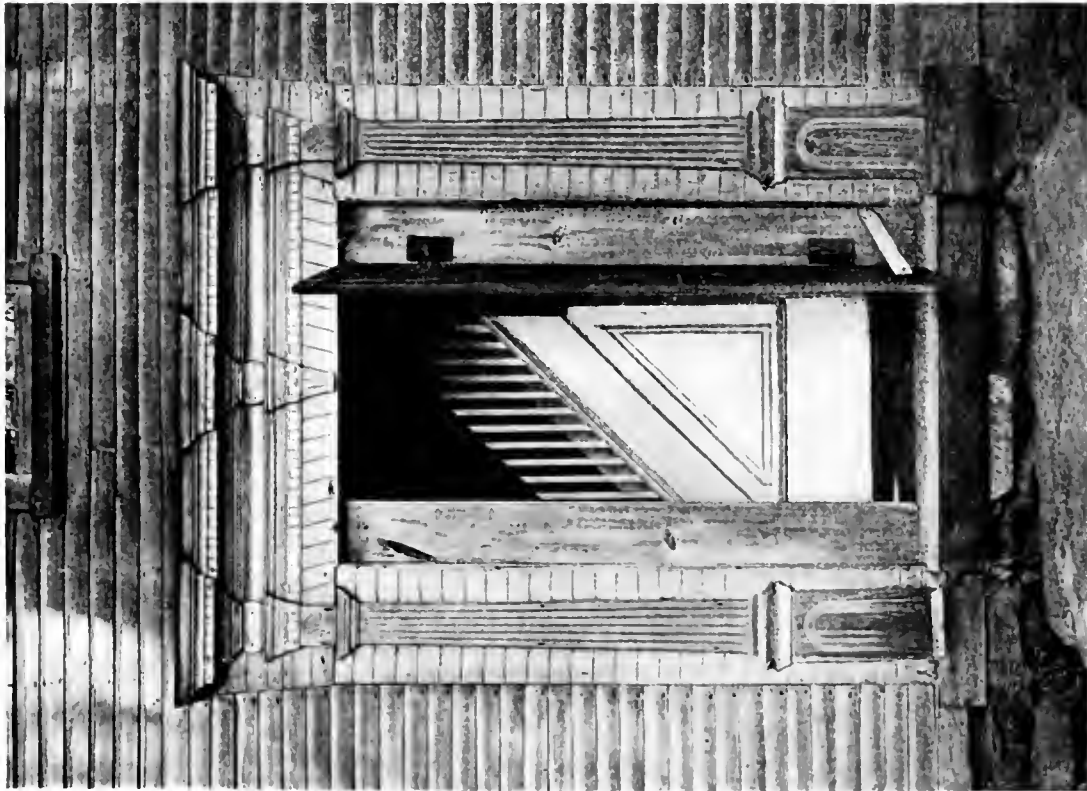
THE OLD MANSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.

A typical example of the work of the Middle—and historically Colonial—type, built in 1768.



THE WETHERALD HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS. Built in 1752.

A less elaborate example than the Williams house of the earliest "architectural" type. Just the sort of house that witches might choose for disturbances, via the chimney route, but for the lamentable fact that the chimney has been torn out, giving the house thereby a decidedly bald and unfinished appearance.



SIDE DOOR DETAIL.

THE HAWKES HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.

Built *circa* 1713.



FRONT DOOR DETAIL.



FRONT DOOR DETAIL.

THE SMITH HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.



FRONT DOOR DETAIL.

THE ROOT HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.

There are earlier doorways, of course, and later ones, and earlier and later houses, and many local traditions and histories relating both to the houses and the people who lived in them, any one of which could be discussed at great length.

Taken all in all, Deerfield cannot be said to have any outstanding features of great monumentality, but it shows as clearly as perhaps any

which came with the later periods, and some of these examples, as the illustrations will show, are of more than usual interest, and many of them, as, for instance, the Old Manse House, are of considerable importance. Those parts of the Indian House which are preserved, namely, an interesting batten doorway, and two brackets which were originally over the over-hang, and an interesting corner cupboard, are of unusual



THE STEBBINS HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS. Built about 1772.

A good example of the embarrassing frequency with which the visitor is confronted with houses that arouse his enthusiasm. Obviously, every house cannot be the "finest" or "most charming" and yet that seems to be what each one is. This particular house probably arouses more futile covetousness on the part of the architecturally inclined visitors than any other building in the town.

town of even larger size and greater importance could do, the complete evolution of architectural design from the earliest Colonial period to the later and more self-conscious design of the early nineteenth century.

Examples of the earliest period are lacking, excepting for a few fragments of the so-called Indian House, dating from considerably before the Indian War, which are preserved by the local Historical Society in its museum. There are examples of each of the successive developments

consequence. The contour of these brackets is particularly good.

It is easy to understand how tenaciously the builders of the earliest houses would have clung to the traditions of building that were common in the parts of England in which they had received their earliest training. It is interesting to follow the changes which took place as time went on in the design of the buildings. As these builders dropped out, the work was carried out by their apprentices and by the apprentices of

these apprentices. There are also examples that show the tendency, as time went on and the settlers became more prosperous, to adopt the styles and manners of living that were found at that time in England. This change, however, does not show the work that was indigenous to the localities from which the builders came, but reflects, as nearly as changed conditions would allow, the latest style in design, and, for that matter, in every other detail of living.

During and shortly after the Revolution a new influence was introduced by the publication in America of reprints of English books on architecture, and at a later period by the books of Asher Benjamin.

Regarding the translation of a manner of building which is essentially one of brick and stone into the easily obtainable white pine and other local woods, Joy Wheeler Dow has this to say in his "American Renaissance":

"The predominant local color which distinguishes American Renaissance has been given to it by what has been our great national building commodity, *i.e.*, wood. The Greeks and Romans built of stone when they had the money to pay for it. Both stone and wood have grain, and have to be used with the same careful regard for it. Whether we build our columns up of stone or wooden sections—latitudinal in the one case, longitudinal in the other—to support a cornice also constructed in sections according to the convenient sizes of commerce for the particular material, makes no difference to the canons of art so long as we are not trying to deceive or to imitate one material with another simply with that end in

view. It is extremely doubtful if our American ancestors were ever guilty of premeditated deception. Their material was an honest material, it had to be fashioned in some way; why not after the manner of the Renaissance?"

Sir Christopher Wren being the supreme actor upon the architectural stage in England at that time, it is natural that his influence would

be strongly felt in the transplantation of architectural ideas between the two countries.

The earliest examples of Renaissance in Deerfield were not always accurate renderings of classic traditions in their design or construction, but there is a certain sturdiness and self-reliance shown in this work which speaks well for the mentalities of the men who were responsible for the work. The translation of details, which were primarily adopted for construction in stone, being built of wood, was carried out more often than not with an apparently large amount of skill, that after all makes the thing seem all right.

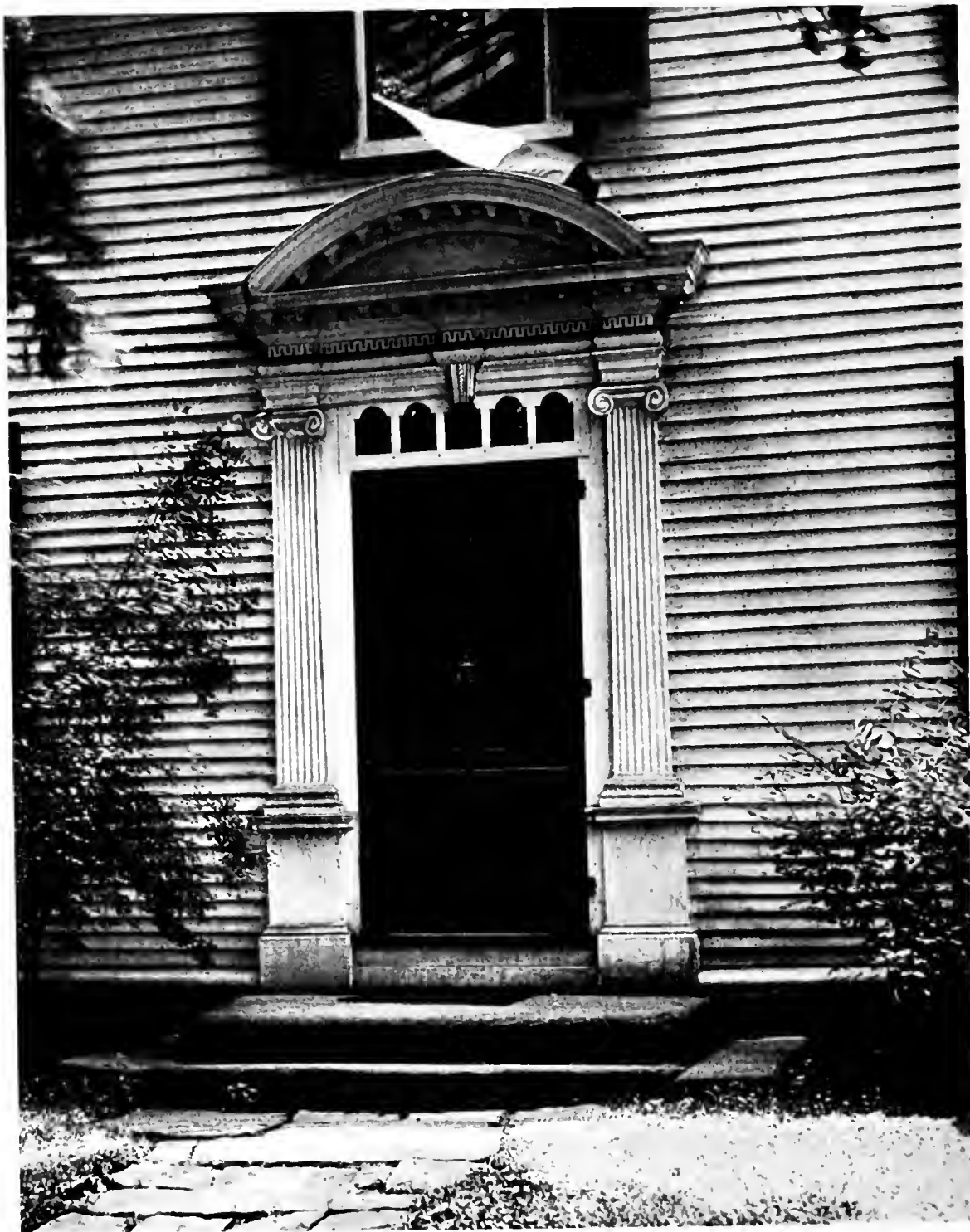
Attention cannot be called too often to the fact that American work does not show a real independence in design until the early years of the nineteenth century. Such men as MacIntire, Hoadley, McComb and others not only contributed very largely to the development of architectural design in America; theirs was a very definite and valuable contribution to the total of the architectural history of the nineteenth century. In Deerfield there are examples not only of the earlier periods which show English influence but also some most excellent examples of this later work of American inspiration.



THE STEBBINS HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.

SIDE DOOR DETAIL.

Though less elaborate than the front door it shows remarkable consistence in design.



THE STEBBINS HOUSE, DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS. Front Door Detail.

The front door of the Stebbins house is certainly a word to the wise, and ought to tell as much as could be put into whole volumes about "White Pine, and Where to Use It." Built one hundred and forty-eight years ago, the wood is as sound and the detail as crisp and distinct as it was in 1772 when the builder put it into place.

WHITE PINE—AND WHERE TO USE IT

V—SIDING

Preceding articles in this Series have given the detailed specifications for White Pine. This and subsequent articles will discuss the reasons for the superiority of White Pine—and fitness of particular grades—in those uses for which it has been recommended.—EDITOR'S NOTE.*

WHILE White Pine can, in all candor, be recommended for almost any domestic building purpose, there are certain special uses for which it is especially suited, and for which no satisfactory substitutes have been found. Nature endowed White Pine with wonderful weather-resisting qualities, which, in her infinite wisdom and economy, she has not duplicated in any other wood.

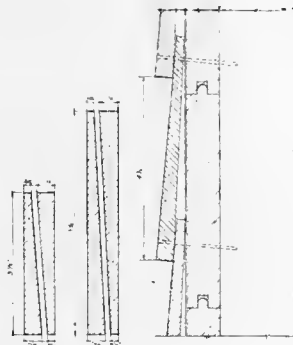
The marked superiority of White Pine under exposure to the weather has been taught us by the experience of builders from the earliest Colonial days down to our own time. It is in the light of this experience that we especially recommend White Pine for outside uses. With two or three exceptions, to be discussed later, other cheaper woods will—where it is necessary to economize—give practically as good service for uses in protected places as White Pine; but there can be no economy in using substitute woods in places where, because of their physical characteristics, they cannot possibly prove satisfactory.

The characteristics of White Pine which have given it its preëminent position are its soft, smooth and close grain, which does not raise through the action of the weather nor after the application of paint; its ability to stay put under the severest exposure without warping or splitting or opening at the joints; its durability and resistance to rot, due, among other things, to the preponderance of heart wood; its easy working qualities, and its ability to hold properly applied paint.

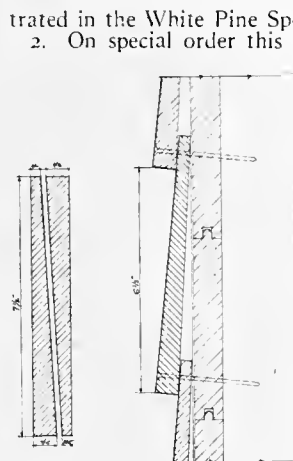
In short, all those qualities which an architect might, had he a free hand, write into his specifications for an ideal wood for siding are found in White Pine.

Disregarding the "Universal Siding Patterns," which are seldom used by architects, there are seven separate and distinct White Pine siding patterns from which to choose: Standard Beveled Siding, Special Beveled Siding, Special Drop Siding, Special Shiplap Siding, Special Wide Siding, Standard Matched Siding and Dimension Shingles. With this wide range of choice at the architect's command, it is possible for him to build his design without sacrificing any of the effects desired. Siding should be specified as an item by itself, and the following suggestions are offered so as to avoid needless negotiations and delays occasioned by not stating just what is wanted.

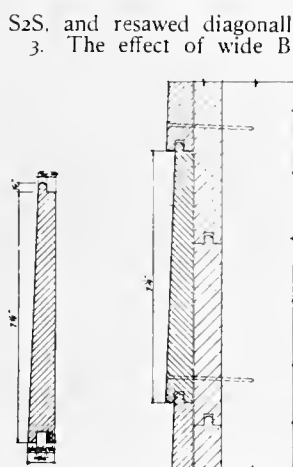
* Volume IV, Number 5, October, 1918; Volume IV, Number 6, December, 1918; Volume V, Number 1, February, 1919, and Volume V, Number 5, October, 1919.



STANDARD STOCK PATTERN
WHITE PINE BEVELED SIDING
Available in 4" x 6" width only.



8" SPECIAL WHITE PINE SIDING
Cut from 1 1/4" Lumber, surfaced
and resawn diagonally.



WHITE PINE SIDING PATTERN 118
Cut from 1" Lumber, available
in 4", 6", 8", 10" widths.

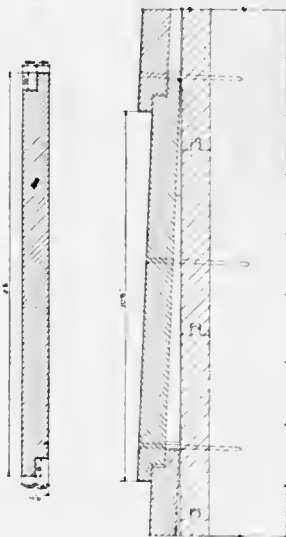
1. White Pine Standard Beveled Siding is a regular stock item, is available only in 4" and 6" widths, and will be found in stock at the average retail lumber yard, or can be readily and promptly secured through any retail lumberman out of stocks on hand at the mills or large distributing yards. The grades are "B" & Better Siding, "C" Siding, "D" Siding and "E" Siding, according to the class of construction, as illustrated in the White Pine Specification Book, pp. 42-45.

2. On special order this same type of Beveled Siding may be secured in 8" and 10" widths, cut, however, from 1 1/4" lumber and sold as finish lumber surfaced two sides (S2S) and resawn diagonally. This represents a common practice where 8" Beveled Siding is desired, but requires, in all cases, special order and manufacture at the mill. It can be secured from any of the White Pine manufacturers through any of the retail lumber channels and should be specified as, "1 1/4 x 8 (or 1 1/4 x 10), 'B' & Better (or 'C' Select or 'D' Select) White Pine Finishing S2S, and resawn diagonally as per detail attached."

3. The effect of wide Beveled Siding can also be secured, again on special order between the retail lumber dealer and the mill, through the use of Drop Siding Pattern No. 118. This pattern is cut from the finishing grades of one inch lumber, is available in 8", 10" and 12" widths, and should be specified as follows: "1 x 8 (or 1 x 10 or 1 x 12) 'B' & Better (or 'C' Select or 'D' Select) White Pine Finishing, run to Northern Standard Drop Siding Pattern No. 118."

4. Very effective wide siding can be had through the usual retail

channels, again on special order with the mill, by the purchase of either of the finishing grades of White Pine already referred to, in either 8", 10" or 12" widths,



WHITE PINE SPECIAL SHIPLAP SIDING
Cut from 1" Lumber, available in 8", 10", 12" widths.

and having it run to standard Shiplap pattern. Specification for this type should read: "1x8 (or 1x10 or 1x12) 'B' & Better (or 'C' Select or 'D' Select) White Pine Finishing run to standard Shiplap pattern."

In 10" or 12" widths, wedges of bearing blocks should be provided as indicated in the diagram, these to be furnished in accordance with detail that may be submitted to any reputable mill work house, these wedges or bearing blocks to be applied outside the sheathing, but directly over each stud.

a number of instances. The pattern suggested is not related to any standard mill pattern, and, therefore, will require a special set-up of the planing mill machinery



10" AND 12" SPECIAL WHITE PINE SIDING
Cut from 1" Lumber, surfaced and rabbetted one edge only.

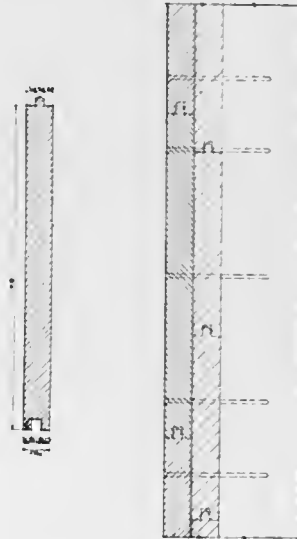
5. For slightly more lap, in 10" or 12" widths, a special pattern is suggested for wide White Pine Siding as used satisfactorily in the planing mill machinery and involve some additional expense over the special White Pine Shiplap Siding indicated under 4. To secure White Pine Siding of this pattern in either 10" or 12" widths, detail should be furnished and specifications should read: "1x10 (or 1x12) 'B' & Better (or 'C' Select or 'D' Select) White Pine Finishing S2S, and rabbetted one edge only as per detail attached." This pattern of wide siding in these widths will require wedges or bearing blocks as shown.

6. Flush White Pine Siding can be readily secured in 8", 10" or 12" widths, where required, by simply specifying, "1x8 (or 1x10 or 1x12) 'B' & Better (or 'C' Select) White Pine Finishing S2S&CM (surfaced on two sides and center matched)."

The use of this type of siding should presuppose a slight opening at the joints.

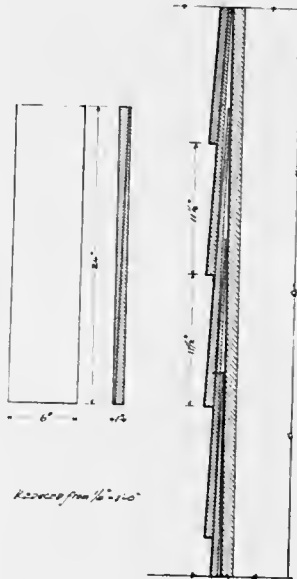
7. White Pine Dimension Shingles are a planing mill product, and can be secured on special order. Specification for them should be, "1x6 'B' & Better

(or 'C' Select or 'D' Select) White Pine Finishing, run to Dimension Shingles, in accordance with attached detail."



10" WHITE PINE MATCHED SIDING
Cut from 1" Lumber, available in 8", 10", 12" widths.

lower the grade of the final product. Standard mill practice requires only that the lumber be purchased on grade in the rough and that the purchaser accept on that basis, without allowance for any degrading in the running. It should be noted also that any kind of lumber if worked into too wide and too thin pieces will have a tendency to split.



WHITE PINE DIMENSION SHINGLES.

steel nails will generally be found efficient and satisfactory.

Before painting, White Pine Siding requires only the shellacking of sapwood and of any small pin knots that may be present.

In general it may be said that White Pine Siding is sold as such only in 4" and 6" widths of the standard pattern illustrated by first diagram.

All of the other six patterns illustrated require the purchase, not of established grades of siding but, rather, of the standard select grades of *finish lumber*, to be worked in accordance with specifications and details furnished.

In such working, certain defects are bound to develop, some of which may be avoided by purchasing a lower grade of the final product. Standard mill practice requires only that the lumber be purchased on grade in the rough and that the purchaser accept on that basis, without allowance for any degrading in the running. It should be noted also that any kind of lumber if worked into too wide and too thin pieces will have a tendency to split.

The nailing problems involved in applying any of the above types of siding should have careful consideration, some slight allowance being made, in the case of the wider widths, for expansion and contraction at the joints.

Siding nails or cut

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